

The Islamic Review

Edited by AL-HAJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN.

[Vol. XVII.]

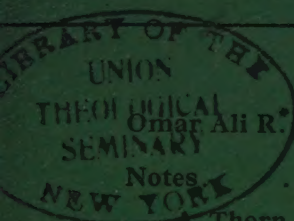
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SHAWWĀL, 1347 A.H.

MARCH, 1929 A.C.

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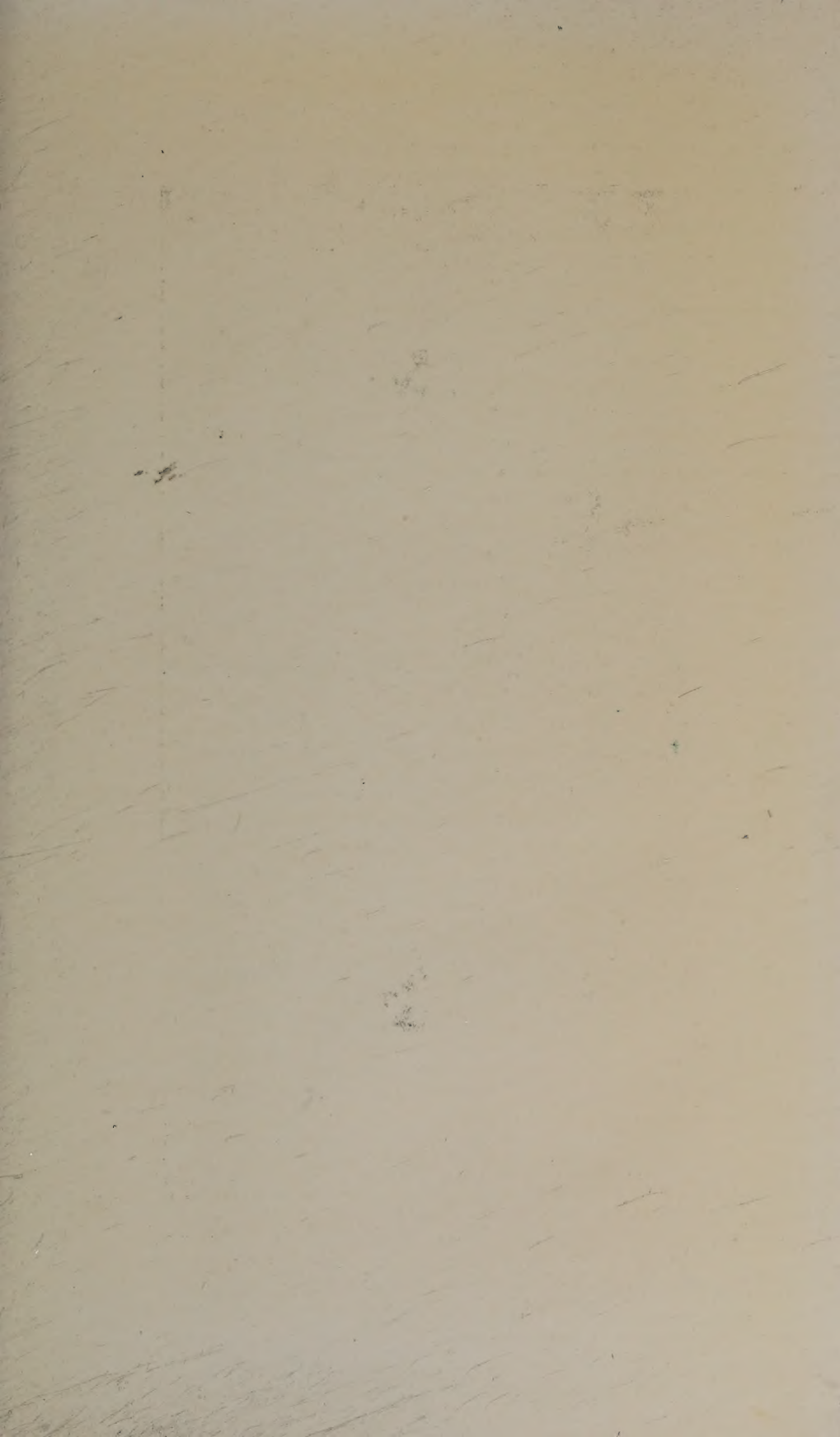
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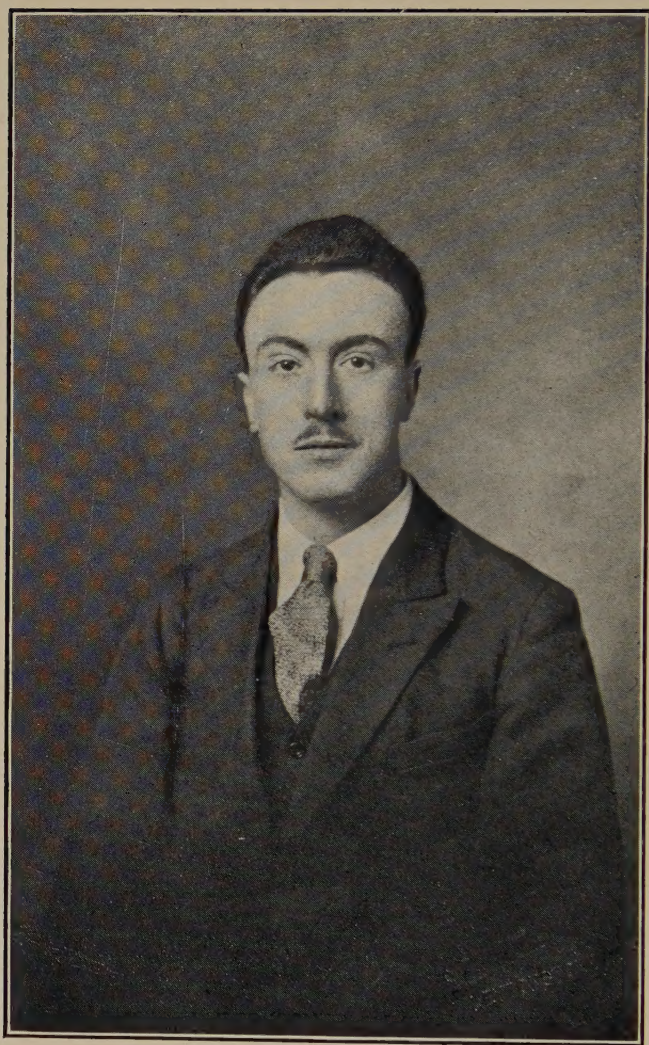
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"The conception of Islam is as wide as humanity itself . . . and is not obscured by such pagan beliefs as Atonement, Redemption, and Saviourship, the basis of the Christian religion. . . . It is belittling to our intellects to be expected to believe that belief in these myths, borrowed from creeds of the Dark Ages of ignorance and superstition, will be essential for our salvation. The books on Islam I have read, and am passing them on among my friends, so that they may get some gleamings of the truth so long debarred to them."

OMAR ALI R. T. DOBSON,
LONDON.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 مُحَمَّدٌ وَآلُهُ عَلَى سُلَّةٍ الْكَرِيمِ

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

SHAWWĀL, 1347 A.H.

VOL. XVII.

MARCH, 1929 A.C.

No. 3

NOTES

A Thorn in the Flesh of Christianity.

In an article entitled "Islam's Challenge to Christianity," which appeared in the *Catholic Times* for January 18, 1929, we are the subject of discussion. The article opens with the following words, which are well worthy of reproduction:—

— While we are apt to view, with scarcely concealed emotion, the occasional wanderings into our fold of those who have lost their way in the dogmatical jungle of Anglicanism, and even to look forward wistfully to a unified Christian Britain, under the ægis of Holy Church, do we realize that we are faced with a peril which, though as small as a man's hand at present, may assume a formidable shape unless resisted by measures of a defensive, if not of an offensive, kind? This peril is the threatened invasion of Britain by Islam, and those who have eyes to see can have little doubt that it is within our gates.

The closing words, although significant, and characteristic of an opponent who is well aware of the hopelessness of his position, have something of a dramatic touch: "Now that the unwelcome guest is within our doors, shall we let him stay or bid him go?"

The assertions of the writer are no news to us; for we expected them sooner or later. We knew that our ideas, by virtue of their being diametrically opposed to those of the Roman Catholic Church, must, sooner or later, create a ripple—in time to become a wave—on the still ocean of Churchi-

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anity. We are conscious of the fact that our thoughts are out to demolish the superstructure which the clergy have raised on the foundations of the doctrine of Original Sin. Our opponent knows that Islamic teachings decline to take a low view of human nature, because Islam believes and preaches that every one of us is born sinless; and it stands to reason that such a doctrine must in the long run tend to weaken the foundations of Churchianity.

No greater insult could be offered to humanity than to say that every new-born child is a sinful being. In Islam human nature is raised to the highest dignity by a plain declaration of its purity, while in the teachings of the Church it is brought to the lowest depths of degradation by declaring its inherent sinfulness, against which it is impossible to contend.

This degraded view of human nature, which forms the corner-stone of the edifice of the Christian religion, must, we are convinced, ere long be abandoned by the civilized world; and the changes introduced into the New Prayer Book lend support to this contention.

Priestcraft is one of the many forms in which "vested interests" manifest themselves, and any institution which aims at giving vested interests their death-blow, or even a rude shaking, can never be welcome to Priestcraft, which has indeed, invented, or grafted on the Christian system of theology, certain institutions which are entirely alien to the teachings of Jesus Christ. This is abundantly evident from the researches of eminent Biblical scholars. A fair sample of these institutions is to be found in the seven sacraments of the Church of Rome, all of which are so designed that they make the clergy an indispensable cog-wheel in the machinery of Christian society. To a Muslim, priests are useless—this institution of priesthood is without meaning and frequently tends to a state of degeneracy. For example, the effect of the sacrament of confession (penance) is to make him who confesses feel indeed a miserable creature not only in his own eyes but also in the eyes of the priest, his fellow-man, to whom he confesses. A Muslim cannot for his life conceive of the degra-

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dation of being subjected to such a mental torture as that of the confessional. Yet there it is, none the less, continually at work—a diabolically efficient method of securing the stranglehold of priestcraft on the ignorant masses. A Muslim recognizes no intermediary between himself and God in spiritual affairs. His desire is to live a free man and to die a free man. Small wonder, then, that we are being looked upon askance by the Roman Catholic Church, and, to our mind, it is just this insistence on religious freedom that alone constitutes the crime on account of which we are branded as “the unwelcome guest.” For otherwise we regard Jesus Christ, whose sole mouthpiece the Roman Catholic Church claims to be, as a true prophet of God, and, what is more, we make no distinction between him and the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

Facts and Figures.

From the same article we give a further excerpt with very slight omissions. The facts and figures contained therein will be read with interest.

Let us face the facts. From the data obtained from the Vatican Mission Museum, it has been estimated that the adherents of Islam to-day number 240 millions, viz. 178 millions in Asia, 33 millions in Africa, 20 millions in Oceania, and 9 millions in Europe.

Christianity, whose adherents number 683 millions, or two-fifths of mankind, is doubtless considerably ahead of Islam, but the disquieting fact is that in the fifteen years ending 1925 the Moslems have increased by 33 millions, or 16 per cent., whereas the gain of Christianity has been relatively small, that of the Catholic Church being only 12 millions, or 4.1 per cent.

If we consider that the increase in the world population, during the same period, has been 165 millions, or 10.6 per cent., the higher percentage of Islamic growth would seem to present an alarming feature.

Here it should be noted that Great Britain is the most important Moslem power in the world; a little less than half the entire Moslem population is within British sphere.

Islam makes enormous strides in Great Britain. In London there are two mosques, and a third on the lines of the mosque-de-luxe in Paris is soon promised, a munificent donation to that end having been made by the Nizam of Hyderabad.

All these London mosques resemble little Meccas on the Moslem festival of Eid-ul-Fitr, when the followers of the Prophet from all parts of the world—Indians, Afghans, Persians, Kurds, Turks, Syrians,

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Arabs, Egyptians, Javanese, with a fair sprinkling of British Moslems, congregate for public worship.

A British Peer (Lord Headley) who bears the title of Al-Hajj, by reason of a pilgrimage to Mecca, leads the Moslem propaganda in Great Britain; another (the late Lord Stanley of Alderley) was an ardent protagonist.

Moslem converts are found alike amongst the upper, the middle, and the lower classes. A good many English women are married to Moslems, having renounced the Christian faith, and their children are being brought up as Moslems. In the survey of Islamic progress in this country, I do not take into account the considerable contingents of Moslems who are temporary visitors, such as seamen, found mostly in British ports.

The vast disparity between the numerical strength of Muslims and Christians is, of course, due to the early start which Christianity had obtained over Islam. The writer, although he considers the causes which have always led to the constant advance of Islam into the hearts of all open-minded persons with whom it comes in contact, employs tactics which are characteristic of the Christian missionary when he confuses the beautiful aspects of Islamic teachings with hearsay and unfounded allegations. This, as we all know too well, is the common missionary method. The writer remarks:—

Islam's easy moral code, which allows polygamy, makes divorce, easy enough in this country, easier still, and legalizes unlimited concubinage, makes it acceptable to dissolute minds. Furthermore, it presents no race or class complex.

Once admitted into its fold, the neophyte, whatever his lineage and status, or his nationality and colour, is freely and frankly received in the most exclusive circle. It goes much farther, in fact, than Socialism, and hence its successful appeal to certain classes.

Islam's hope in Britain rests on the disruptive forces at work within the Anglican communion, and on the belief that the rank and file are drawing closer and closer to its social ethics, especially in sexual matters.

Hence Islam, though itself passing through a transition stage in some lands, deliberately contends for the soul of Europe, and of Britain in particular. Christianity and Islam have met at many points down the centuries, but at no time has the effect of the clash been so palpable as in the short space of time following the war, during which the Islamic menace has been transformed from a bogey into a reality.

That Islam, when it has no material backing to support its cogent logic, should be ahead of Christianity is nothing short of a miracle. It is interesting to speculate as to what

the world would be if Muslims could once more rekindle the fire of their ancient culture, as it was in Spain and under the 'Abbaside Caliphate in Baghdad.

Islam will continue to forge ahead of all religions, for it is a religion that is essentially rationalistic; it is unencumbered with theological subtleties; its simple creed, "There is no god but God, and Muhammad is His Prophet," is within the compass of the intelligence of all; its teachings are simple and clear; and it possesses a world-wide brotherhood into which every believer, whatever be his race, colour, or antecedents, is received as an equal among equals. Can the same be said of Christianity as practised to-day?

Concubinage in Islam.

It would have been, perhaps, not inappropriate for us to have commented on the allegations contained in the extract quoted in the preceding note. But we have criticized them and commented upon them so often that we feel that it is better to refrain and to confine ourselves rather to the specific allegation which asserts that Islam countenances and legalizes concubinage.

No greater authority than Maulvi Muhammad Ali, M.A., LL.B., translator of the Holy Qur-án, can be quoted on the question. He says in his translation, on page 200: "I do not find any verse in the Holy Qur-án, or any other instance in the Prophet's life, sanctioning so-called concubinage." Islam looks upon the married state as the normal state, and hence it enjoins that, so far as possible, those who are single should be married. It also requires both male and female slaves—war-captives—to be kept in a state of marriage. The keeping of concubines or unmarried slave girls is clearly inconsistent with the verse which reads: "And marry those among you who are single and those who are fit among your male slaves and female slaves" (xxiv. 32). As a religion, Islam is against both celibacy and concubinage.

If here and there people have flouted the teachings of the Qur-án, it is certainly unfair to hold the Qur-án or the Prophet

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Muhammad responsible. The verses of the Qur-án are quite clear on the point.

Race Arrogance.

The depths to which the dogmatized and organized Christian Church can sink were described by Mr. C. F. Andrews in an address delivered before the Student Christian Movement Conference in Liverpool on January 4, 1929. Mr. Andrews, who is a teacher at Tagore's school at Santiniketan, Bengal, has been spoken of as "the most trusted Englishman in India." He has a long period of disinterested, selfless public service to his credit both in Africa and India and his remarks, which we print below, contain not a few telling truths which should serve as a rude reminder to those Church dignitaries who are dreaming of a world-wide campaign to evangelize the Muslim world. He is reported to have said:—¹

Race arrogance, pride, superiority, and domination all arose, only a few centuries ago, out of slavery. It came after the Reformation, when, alas, Christian Europe began to make slaves in Africa and elsewhere, and to engage in the slave-traffic.

It was that, above everything else, that started this race complex, that made this race poison run through the veins of your and my ancestry until, alas, we have it in our veins even to-day.

And this is more terrible still. It was out of slavery that those abominations on God's earth, race churches, began—Christian churches confined to the white races, which no other Christian could enter if he had not the colour of the skin of the white man.

Mr. Andrews said that was only half the picture, however. The worst was the raising up of racial churches, in which white men would not tolerate the presence of other races.

His own very first experience in South Africa was that on Boxing Day (a Sunday), while he was preaching a sermon of good will to all men, Mahatma Ghandi himself attempted to enter the church, but was not allowed to do so. He was cast out as an outcast when he longed to hear the message.

"If I had only known it," said Mr. Andrews, "I would have had to stop there and then, shake the dust from my feet, and get out of the church."

He added that the same thing would have happened to any other Indian or African Christian; if Dr. Koo or Dr. Datta, attending that conference, had attempted to enter that church, they too would have been refused admission.

That was the state of things we had come to, and it made life, to him, intolerable.

¹ *Liverpool Echo* for January 4, 1929.

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Does this not prove that the Church, after its 2,000 years of existence and evolution, has signally failed even to create a Christian atmosphere in the minds of its adherents—failed to suggest to them that there are no race considerations in places dedicated to the worship of God the Almighty—and this is apart altogether from the planing of the rough edges of racial characteristics—a task with which we are convinced the Church can never now dream of grappling? That there are in Africa and India such separate places of worship means that the clergy are lending moral as well as active support to the widening of the gulf existing between the one race and the other. How anachronistic this policy is can well be imagined when we remember the rapidity with which recent scientific discoveries and conquests of Nature are joining together the farthest-flung portions of the world.

Religion, which one would imagine came to the world for the purpose of spreading peace and concord, is doing just the reverse as far as its exponent, the Church, is concerned.

Should we be wrong in supposing that the Church, when she sets apart separate buildings for the white and the coloured peoples, is merely interpreting by its action the spirit of the passage in the Gospel of St. Matthew which reads: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword"?

In Islam, as is well known and recognized even by the clergy, race hatred has no place. There is no distinction between man and man in a Mosque. All worldly differences and distinctive marks count for nothing in the presence of God the Almighty.

Why do Fewer Men than Women attend Churches?

Everyone who visits Europe for the first time can hardly fail to notice a preponderating majority of women over men in the places of worship. Does this state of affairs suggest that the Christian religion, as presented by the Church, is feminine in character, effeminate in its conceptions and more suited to woman's temperament than to that of man? These are the questions which two leading articles in *The Christian*

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Life (for January 26 and February 2, 1929) have set themselves to answer. The writer comes to the conclusions set forth in the following rather lengthy excerpts, which, however, will, we hope, be read with interest:—

It is scarcely probable that the distractions of "the world" appeal enough, more powerfully to men than to women, to explain the disparity of the sexes in the average congregation. We are almost forced to the conclusion that religion, as it is ordinarily presented, is less attractive to the masculine than to the feminine nature. The wisest word that we know upon this question is by Professor George Albert Coe in his little book on *The Spiritual Life*, which all parents and teachers of children should read. He says: "Any large and persistent excess of women in the churches is chiefly due to a superior adaptation of Church life to the female nature. It is because the Church looks at things with feminine eyes and calls chiefly into exercise the faculties in which women excel men." He notes Lawell's remark concerning the citizen of the future, in which the poet says that religion will be more than—

"an ambulance

To fetch life's wounded malingerers in,
Scorned by the strong."

" "Scorned by the strong"—that," says Professor Coe, "is the rebuke that stings; and it stings because of the measure of truth it conveys. The practical question that emerges, then, is whether masculine strength would not be drawn to the churches if preachers put proportional stress upon the more rugged, active, intellectual, and social virtues, if they held up the complete ideal for humanity with not even a fragment lacking." Doubtless only a small minority of people would place prominently in their definition of religion the altruistic and intellectual qualities and the more active virtues, such as religious work, generosity, aggressiveness, persistence, power to withstand and to do—qualities that are so much admitted by men. Probably a large majority think of religion as consisting primarily in other-worldliness, mysticism, prayer, heavenly contemplation, reverence, and the passive virtues, such as gentleness, meekness, humility, patience, and trust—qualities that, however indispensable to perfect manhood, we commonly regard as more especially belonging to women.

A study of sacred art, also, will show that it is these passive rather than the active virtues that have formed the spiritual ideal in the minds of the masters of chisel and brush. It is often said that the Church possesses no picture of the face of Christ that is manly and strong. Rather, the Master is always represented as "the meek and lowly Jesus," a man of sorrows, pitiable, effeminate, weak. The only strength suggested is strength to endure, but not to do. Verily the "orthodox" Church has given Nietzsche some ground for his scornful accusation against Christianity when he charges that it is a worship of weakness rather than of strength.

An extensive and profound psychological study of the whole question would doubtless discover that a very prolific cause of the aloofness

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of many men from the churches is the undue exaltation of those qualities of the mind and heart that by their very nature appeal to the feminine, an exaltation that has relegated the so-called masculine virtues, the manly element in religion, to a secondary place. The pulpit has made more of the passive than of the active virtues; more of the meekness of Jesus than of his manhood; more of his patience than of his power. It is almost true that it has presented an emasculated Christianity. The "eternal feminine" has predominated in both its word and its work. It is not to be wondered at that for this reason it has won the hearts and co-operation of more women than men. The remedy is too obvious to be stated.

The conclusions arrived at in the above set in motion a train of thought which leads us to wonder if Jesus could at all be made to appear as a propounder of the active qualities associated with the temperament of a man. Let it be clearly understood that by this suggestion we have no desire to disparage the mission of the Holy Prophet Jesus Christ; for as Muslims we cannot say that he did not perfect his mission.

But our contemporary, as it seems to us, forgets that Jesus' mission was to the Jews, who lacked the passive virtues. Jesus came to the Jews, who were stubborn and callous; who believed in an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth; who were relentless in their dealings and rigid in their religious rites. In order to counterbalance the baneful effect of these qualities, cultivated through the ages to a degree approximating to absurdity, Jesus preached humility and kindness, other-worldliness and the heavenly kingdom, patience and trust. A study of Jesus, as a man, shows that his manly character is overshadowed by passive virtues. We wonder how it can be at all possible for a Christian preacher to give prominence to his manly qualities as against his passive virtues; and this is largely due to the fact that Jesus' life is far from being sufficiently diversified to serve as a model and a pattern for every one of us. He was, no doubt, a teacher and a model—but only for the practice of humility and kindness—the virtues he sought to inculcate in his people. His life does not possess enough material to meet the needs of the day, and the world in general has been left to its own judgment on many vital points. If we leave aside the mystical

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side of the creed of Christianity, the sermons and other utterances of Jesus do not come up to our demands; for the teachings of Jesus, as recorded, give a general outline of love and kindness, and that, too, in an idealistic manner that hardly adapts itself to the practical side of life. The ideals of Jesus, rather more than less, tend to influence the individual towards the life of a recluse. They do not fit in with social or national life or with manly aspirations.

There is, moreover, a sort of discrepancy between the various utterances of Jesus and his recorded actions, which does not help in understanding his precepts. His actions are, in a way, often contrary to his own teachings. Such discrepancies constitute no attraction for the man; for what a man admires more than anything is consistency.

This reflection is based on hard facts, and it is not out of place to remark that his disciples and other contemporaries are responsible for it; for they were not careful enough to leave us an adequate record of his life. But the potent fact remains that the character of Jesus, as depicted by the Gospels, can never be a really attractive one to a man.

Ourselves.

The manager, the *Islamic Review* sub-office, Lahore, India, asks us to convey his best thanks for the valuable co-operation which generous-minded friends have rendered him in making his appeal for new subscribers such a notable success. Need we add that the generous response which he received will be of incalculable assistance in strengthening our activities here?

Owing to the month of Ramazān, our next issue will, as usual, take the form of a double number for the months of April-May, 1929.

“Europe’s Debt to Islam.”

Owing to pressure on our space we are compelled to hold over these interesting instalments. We hope, however, to resume their publication in our next issue.

NOTES

British Muslim Society, London, and the Woking Muslim Mission.

The following brief items of news will, we are sure, be of interest to our readers :—

LECTURES.

The British Muslim Society, in conjunction with the Woking Muslim Mission, arranged the following lectures, to be delivered at the London Muslim Prayer House, 111, Campden Hill Road, London, W. 8, at 5 p.m. :—

Sunday, February 10, 1929.—Al-Hajj the Lord Headley, spoke on "Modernizing Islam." Mr. 'Abdullah Yūsuf 'Ali, I.C.S. (retd.), C.B.E., was in the chair.

Sunday, February 17, 1929.—Prof. Haroun M. Léon, M.A., Ph.D., spoke on "Other Worlds Than Ours."

Sunday, February 24, 1929.—Maulvi 'Abdu 'l-Majid, M.A., spoke on "Is Westernization in Muslim Countries an Unnatural Phenomenon?"

Sunday, February 17, 1929, at 11 a.m., at the Free Religious Movement, Lindsey Hall, The Mall, Notting Hill Gate, London, W., Maulvie 'Abdu 'l-Majid spoke on "The Influence of Islam on European Culture."

A SOCIAL.

Under the auspices of the Society, a social was arranged for Saturday, February 9, 1929, at 7.30 p.m., at the premises of the Reform Club, Spiritualist Church, St. Luke's Road, London, S.W. The social was open to both members and non-members of the Society.

ARABIC CLASSES.

The Arabic classes are conducted by Mr. M. Yosrī (of Cairo), Joint-Secretary, British Muslim Society, London, on Fridays, from 7.30 p.m. to 9 p.m., for the benefit of friends and students of Islam, especially new Muslim friends.

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MUHAMMAD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

By PROFESSOR 'ABDU 'L-AHAD DÁWÚD, B.D.

IX

GENUINE PROPHETS PREACH ONLY ISLĀM

[The learned Professor is open to correspondence on the questions discussed and points raised in this article. Readers can write to him care of the Editor, the *Islamic Review*, Woking.—ED. I.R.]

THERE is no nation known to history like the people of Israel, which, during a period of less than four hundred years, was infested with myriads of false prophets, not to mention the swarms of sorcerers, soothsayers and all sorts of witchcrafts and magicians. The false prophets were of two kinds: those who professed the religion and the Torah (Law) of Yahweh and pretended to prophesy in His name, and those who under the patronage of an idolater Israelite monarch prophesied in the name of Báal or other deities of the neighbouring heathen peoples. Belonging to the former category there were several impostors as contemporaries with the true prophets like Mikha (Micah) and Jeremiah, and to the latter there were those who gave much trouble to Elijah, and caused the massacres of the true prophets and believers during the reign of Ahab and his wife Jezebel. Most dangerous of all to the cause of true faith and religion were the pseudo-prophets, who conducted the divine services in the temple as well as in the Misphas and pretended to deliver the oracles of God to the people. No prophet, perhaps, received at the hands of these impostors more of persecution and hardships than the Prophet Jeremiah.

While still a young man, Jeremiah began his prophetic mission about the latter quarter of the seventh century before the Christian era, when the Kingdom of Judah was in great danger of invasion by the armies of the Chaldeans. The Jews had entered into alliance with the Pharaoh of Egypt, but as the latter had been badly defeated by the troops of Nebuchadnezzar, Jerusalem's doom was merely a question of time. In these critical days, during which the fate of the remnant of

MUHAMMAD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

the people of God was to be decided, the Prophet Jeremiah was stoutly advising the king and the leaders of the Jews to submit and serve the King of Babylon, so that Jerusalem might be saved from being burnt down to ashes and the people from being deported into captivity. He poured out all his eloquent and fiery discourses into the ears of the kings, the priests, and the elders of the people, but all of no avail. He delivered message after message from God, saying that the only remedy for saving the country and the people from the imminent destruction was to submit to the Chaldeans; but there was no one to lend ear to his warnings.

Nebuchadnezzar comes and takes the city, carries away with him the king, the princes, and many captives, as well as all the treasures of the temple, including the gold and silver vessels. Another prince, and a third one, is appointed by the Emperor of Babylon to reign as his vassal in Jerusalem. This king, instead of being wise and loyal to his master of Babylon, revolts against him. Jeremiah incessantly admonishes the king to remain loyal and to abandon the Egyptian policy. But the false prophets continue to harangue in the temple, saying: "Thus says the Lord of hosts, Behold, I have broken the yoke of the King of Babylon, and in two years' time all the Jewish captives and the vessels of the House of God will be returned to Jerusalem." Jeremiah makes a wooden yoke round his own neck and goes to the temple and tells the people that God has been pleased to place in this way the yoke of the monarch of Babylon upon the neck of all the Jews. He is struck on the face by one opponent prophet, who breaks to pieces the wooden yoke from Jeremiah's neck and repeats the harangue of the false prophets. Jeremiah is thrown into a deep dungeon full of mire, and is fed only on a dry loaf of barley a day until a famine prevails in the city, which is besieged by the Chaldeans. The pseudo-prophet Hananiah dies as Jeremiah had foretold. The wall of the city is thrown down somewhere, and the victorious army rushes into the city, the fleeing King Zedekiah and his retinue are seized and taken to the King of Babylon. The city and the temple, after being pillaged, are set on fire and all the inhabi-

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tants of Jerusalem are carried into Babylonia; only the poorer classes are left to cultivate the land. By order of Nebuchadnezzar, Jeremiah is granted a favour of staying in Jerusalem, and the newly appointed governor, Gedaliah, is charged to guard and well look after the prophet. But Gedaliah is killed by the rebellious Jews, and then they all flee to Egypt, carrying Jeremiah with them. Even in Egypt he prophesies against the fugitives and the Egyptians. He must have ended his life in Egypt.

His book, as it now stands, is quite different from the text of the Septuagint; evidently the copy from which the Greek text was written by the Alexandrian translators had a different order of chapters.

The Biblical critics consider that Jeremiah was the author, or, at any rate, a compiler, of the fifth book of the Pentateuch called Deuteronomy. I myself am of the same opinion. Jeremiah was a Levite and a priest as well as a prophet. There is much of Jeremiah's teachings in Deuteronomy which are unknown in the rest of the Old Testament writings. And I take one of these teachings for my present subject, which I consider as one of the gems or golden texts of the Old Testament and must be esteemed very precious and holy.

After this detailed explanation I hasten to the main point which I have selected for the topic of this article: How to distinguish a genuine prophet from a false prophet. Jeremiah has supplied us with a fairly satisfactory answer, namely:

“ The Prophet who preaches Islām.”

In the Book of Deuteronomy (xiii. 1-5, xviii. 20-22) God the Almighty gives some instructions concerning the false prophets who may prophesy in the name of the Lord and in such an insidious way that they could mislead His people. Further, he tells us that the best way to find out the impostor's perfidy was to anticipate the fulfilment of his predictions, and then to put him to death when his fraud was divulged. But, as is well known, the ignorant cannot well distinguish between the genuine prophet and the impostor, just as much as they to-day are unable to definitely discover which of the

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two, a Roman Catholic priest or a Calvinist minister, is a genuine follower of Jesus Christ! A false prophet would also foretell events, work wonders, and do other religious things similar—at least in appearance—to those performed by a true one. The competition between the Prophet Moses and the magicians of Egypt is an apt illustration of this statement. Thus it is Jeremiah who gives us the best way of testing the veracity, the genuineness, of a prophet, and that way is the sign of Islam. Please read the whole chapter xxviii. of Jeremiah, and then ponder and reflect on the ninth verse:—

“The prophet which foretells the Islam (Shālōm), at the coming of the word of the Prophet, that prophet will be recognized to have been sent by God in truth” (Jer. xxviii. 9).

This translation is strictly literal. The original verb *naba*, usually translated as “to foretell” or “to prophesy,” and the noun *nābi*, “a prophet,” has given the impression that a prophet is a person who foretells the future or past events by the aid of divine revelation. This definition is only partially true. The complete definition of the word “prophet” must be: “one who receives oracles or messages from God, and delivers them faithfully to the person or people intended.” It is evident that a divine message need not necessarily be a foretelling of past and future events. In the same way the verb “prophesy” does not necessarily mean to reveal the past or future occurrences, but rather to preach or promulgate the message from God. Consequently to prophesy is to deliver and utter a *new* oracle, its nature or character being quite immaterial. To read the words of a prophet would be to prophesy no more than would a prophet *deliver an oracle* when making a discourse or public speech of his own accord. In the Qur-án God orders His beloved servant Muhammad to declare: “I am flesh like unto yourselves; only revelation comes to me,” etc., so that we may be careful not to attribute to any of the prophets the quality of knowing and saying everything through the revelation. The divine revelations used to come at intervals, while the prophets in their personal

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intercourse and knowledge might be liable to mistakes and errors. A prophet is not appointed by God to teach humanity physics, mathematics, or any other positive science. It would be very unjust on our part to blame a prophet for a slip of language or a mistake committed *as a man*.

A prophet, therefore, is the subject of test and examination only when he *officially* and *formally delivers* the *message* he has received from his Lord. His private affairs, his family concerns, and his personal attainments do not concern us so much as his *mission* and *office*. In order to find out whether a prophet is genuine or an impostor, it is not fair to give a verdict against his prophetic character because he is reported to have been a little harsh or rude to his mother or because he believed in the literal inspiration and the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. While making this observation, I have in mind the case of Jesus Christ, and many others in the history of Israel on other points.

It is *mala fides* and illwill to accuse prophets of sensuality, rudeness, ignorance in sciences, and of other personal frailties. They were men like ourselves and subject to the same natural inclinations and passions. They were protected only from mortal sins and from the perversion of the message they had to hand further. We must be extremely careful not to exalt the prophets of God too high in our imagination, lest God be displeased with us. They are all His creatures and servants; they accomplished their work and returned to Him. The moment we forget God and concentrate our love and admiration upon the person of any of the messengers of God we are in danger of falling into the sin of polytheism.

Having so far explained the nature and the signification of the prophet and the prophecy, I shall now endeavour to prove that no prophet could be genuine unless, as Jeremiah expressly says, he preaches and propagates the religion of Islam.

In order to understand better the sense and the importance of the passage under our contemplation we should just cast a glance over the preceding verse where Jeremiah tells his antagonist Prophet Hananiah: "The prophets that have been before me and before thee from old (times) prophesied against

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many lands, and against great kingdoms, concerning war and evil and pestilence." Then he proceeds:—

"The prophet that prophesies concerning Islam as soon as the word of the prophet comes, that prophet is known to have been sent by the Lord in truth."

There can be raised no serious objection to the English wording of this passage excepting the clause "*l shālōm*" which I have translated as "concerning Islam." The preposition "*l*" before "*shālōm*" signifies "concerning" or "about," and places its subject in the objective case and not in the dative, as it would be if the predicate were a verb like "come," "go," or "give."

That "*shālōm*" and the Syriac "*shlāmā*," as well as the Arabic "*salām*" and "*Islām*," are of one and the same Semitic root, "*shālām*," and mean the same thing, is an admitted truth by all the scholars of the Semitic languages. The verb "*shālām*" signifies "to submit, resign oneself to," and then "to make peace"; and consequently "to be safe, sound, and tranquil." No religious system in the world has ever been qualified with a better and more comprehensive, dignified, and sublime name than that of "Islam." The true Religion of the True God cannot be named after the name of any of His servants, and much less after the name of a people or country. It is, indeed, this sanctity and the inviolability of the word "Islam" that strikes its enemies with awe, fear, and reverence even when the Muslims are weak and unhappy. It is the name and title of a religion that teaches and commands an absolute submission and resignation of will and self to the Supreme Being, and then to obtain peace and tranquillity in mind and at home, no matter what tribulations or passing misfortunes may threaten us that fills its opponents with awe.¹

¹ It is interesting and significant to note how the observations of the learned Professor coincide with those of the ex-Kaiser of Germany who, on the occasion of his seventieth birthday celebrations at Doorn, Holland, was reported to have said in his speech: "And understand this—if ever the Muhammadans should conceive the idea that it is Allah's command to bring order into a declining West and subjugate to His will, then—with faith in God—they will come upon the godless

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It is the firm and unshaking belief in the Oneness of Allah and the unswerving confidence in His mercy and justice that makes a Muslim distinguishable and prominent among non-Muslims. And it is this sound faith in Allah and the sincere attachment to His Holy Qur-án and the Apostle that the Christian missionaries have been desperately attacking and have hopelessly failed. Hence, Jeremiah's words that "the Prophet who prophesies, namely, who preaches and speaks concerning the affairs of Islam as his religion, he will at once be known to have been sent by the Lord in truth." Let us, therefore, take into serious consideration the following points:—

1. The Prophet Jeremiah is the only prophet before Christ who uses the word Shālōm in the sense of a religion. He is the only prophet who uses this word with the object of setting or proving the veracity of a messenger of God. According to the Qur-ánic revelation, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and all the prophets were Muslims, and professed Islam as their religion. The term "Islām" and its equivalents, "Shālōm" and "Shlāmā," were known to the Jews and Christians of Mecca and Medina when Muhammad appeared to perfect and universalize the religion of Islam. A prophet who predicts "peace" as an abstract, vague and temporary condition cannot succeed in proving his identity thereby. In fact, the point of dispute, or rather the critical national question, controverted by the two eminent prophets known to the court and the nation like Jeremiah and Hananiah (Jer. xxviii.), could not be solved and definitely settled by the affirmation of the one and the denial of the other, of the imminent catastrophe. To predict "peace" by Jeremiah when he had all the time been predicting the great national disaster—either by the submission of the King Sidaqia to the Chaldean sovereign or by his resistance—would not only involve his failure, not to talk of his being a success in proving his veracity, but also it would make him even ridiculous. For, in either case, his presumed "peace" would mean no peace at all.

Europeans like a tidal wave, against which even the reddest Bolshevik, full of eagerness for combat, will be helpless." (*Evening Standard*, London, January 26, 1929.)

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On the contrary, if the Jews resisted the Chaldean army, it meant a complete national ruin, and if they submitted, an unconditional servitude. It is evident, therefore, that Jeremiah uses the term "Shālôm" in the sense of a tangible, concrete, and real religious system which Islam comprises. To make it more clear, we should attentively listen to the arguments of the two opponent prophets discussing and disputing the national question in the presence of a wicked king and his court of vile flatterers and depraved hypocrites. Jeremiah has at heart the cause of God and His religion of peace, and in the vital interests of the religion of peace, or Islam, he advises the wicked king and his courtiers to submit to the yoke of Babylon and serve the Chaldeans and *live*. For there was no other alternative open to them. They had abandoned the God of their forefathers, polluted His temple, mocked and reviled His prophets, and committed evil and treachery (2 Chron. xxxvi., etc.). So God had delivered them into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, and would not save them. For a true and sincere servant of God, the religion comes first and the nation after. It is the government and the nation—especially when they have forsaken God—that are to be *sacrificed* for the cause of religion, and not *vice versa*! The other Prophet of Gibeon, called Hananiah, sought to please his master the king; he was a courtier and favourite, rich and in splendour, whereas his antagonist was always languishing and starving in the prisons and dungeons. He cares not a filip for the religion and the real welfare of the people. He is also a prophet, for so says the Book of Jeremiah, yet he is a villain, and has exchanged God for a depraved king! He prophesies in the name of the same God as does Jeremiah, and announces the return of the booty and the captives from Babylon in two years' time.

Now, from the above imperfect description of the prophets, which of the two would you qualify as the true servant of God and as the loyal defender of God's religion? Surely Jeremiah would at once attract your sympathy and choice.

2. It is only the religion of Shālôm, of Islam, that can testify to the character and the office of a true prophet, Imam,

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or any minister of God on earth. God is one, and His religion is one. There is no other religion in the world like Islam, which professes and defends this absolute unity of the Deity. He who, therefore, sacrifices every other interest, honour and love for the cause of this Holy Religion, he is undoubtedly the genuine prophet and the minister of God. But there is still one thing more worthy of our notice, and that thing is this: If the religion of Islam be not the standard and the measure by which to test the veracity of a prophet or minister of God, then there is no other criterion to answer that purpose. A miracle is not always a sufficient proof, for the sorcerers also work wonders. The fulfilment of a prophecy or prediction, too, is not in itself a sufficient proof; for just as one holy Spirit reveals a future event to a true prophet, so does sometimes an evil spirit the same to an impostor. Hence it is clear that the prophet who "prophesies concerning Shālōm—Islam—as being the name of Faith and path of life, as soon as he receives a message from God he will be known to have been sent by Him." Such was the argument which Jeremiah had recourse to and with which he wished to convince his audience of the falsity of Hananiah. But the wicked king and his entourage would not listen to and obey the word of God.

3. As argued in the preceding paragraph, it should be noted that neither the fulfilment of a prediction nor the working of a miracle was enough to prove the genuine character of a prophet; that the loyalty and strict attachment to the religion is the best and the decisive proof for the purpose; that "Shālōm" was used to express the religion of peace. Once again we repeat the same assertion that Shālōm is no other than Islam. And we demand from those who would object to this interpretation to produce an Arabic word besides Islam and Salām as the equivalent of the Shālōm, and also to find for us another word in Hebrew besides Shālōm that would convey and express the same meaning as Islam. It is impossible to produce another such an equivalent. Therefore we are forced to admit that Shālōm is the same as "salām" or "peace" in the abstract, and "Islām" as a religion and faith in the concrete.

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4. As the Qur-án in chap. ii. expressly reminds us that Abraham and his sons and grandsons were the followers of Islam; that they were neither Jews nor Christians; that they preached and propagated the worship and the faith in the one God to all the peoples among whom they sojourned or dwelt, we must admit that not only the Jews, but several other nations that descended from the other sons of Abraham and many tribes converted and absorbed by them, were also Muslims; that is to say, believers in Allah and resigned to His will. There were the people of Esau, the Edomites, the Midianites, and numerous other peoples living in Arabia, who knew God and worshipped Him like the Israelites. These peoples had also their own prophets and religious guides like Job, Jethro (the father-in-law of the Prophet Moses), Balaam, Hud, and many others. But they, like the Jews, had taken to idolatry until it was totally eradicated by the Prince of the Prophets. The Jews, in about the fifth century B.C., produced the greater portion of their canonical books of the Old Testament, when the memories of the conquest of the land of Canaan by Joshua, the temple and Jerusalem of Solomon, were events buried in the past epochs of their wondrous history. A nationalistic and Judaistic spirit of solicitude and seclusion reigned among the small remnant of Israel; the belief in the coming of a great Saviour to restore the lost throne and crown of David was regnant, and the old meaning of "Shālôm" as the name of the religion of Abraham and common to all the different peoples descended from him was no longer remembered. It is from this point of view that I regard this passage of Jeremiah as one of the golden texts in the Hebrew sacred writ.

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—111, Campden Hill Road, Notting Hill Gate, London—every Friday
at 1 p.m. **Sunday Lectures** at 5 p.m. **Qur-án and Arabic
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Service, Sermon, and Lectures every Sunday at the Mosque, Woking,
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PROPHECIES IN THE QUR-ÁN ON THE JEWS, CHRISTIANS, AND MUSLIMS

By SYED MAQBOOL AHMED, B.A.

THERE are prophecies in the New Testament that have never been fulfilled, and yet the book is *par excellence* a revealed book. There are prophecies in the Qur-án that have been fulfilled to the very letter, and yet the book is only a forgery of the Prophet! Could there be a more ridiculous claim than this? But every orthodox Christian has this as one of his articles of faith. I propose in this short article to give three prophecies of Al-Qur-án with respect to the Jews, Christians, and Muslims and leave the reader to judge how far they have been confirmed by history.

About the Jews. We read in the Qur-án in chap. iii. 54: "When Allah said: O Jesus! I shall cause thee to die and raise thee towards Me, and purify thee from those who have disbelieved, and I shall put thy followers over those who have disbelieved until the day of Judgment, then to Me shall be your return, and I shall decide between you concerning that in which you have differed." (Italics are mine.)

A very bold prophecy indeed, to predict that Jews and all those who disbelieve shall remain ever and ever under the subjection of those who follow Jesus Christ, be they Muslims or Christians. How soothing and comforting this prophecy will be to those who are threatened by Jewish political ascendancy in Palestine! The Jews shall always remain under the rule of the Muslims and Christians. The Qur-án challenges the Jews to try their worst stratagems and bring all Balfourists to their aid.

About the Christians. The Qur-án says in chap. v. 14: "And those who call themselves Christians, We made a covenant with them, then they neglected a greater part of what they were reminded of. Therefore we have excited among them hatred and enmity till the day of Judgment, and

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in the end God will tell them what they did." (*Italics are mine.*)

The prophecy that there shall always be hatred and enmity between the various Christian people has been fulfilled in all ages, and never more clearly than in the great European war of our own day. And God will surely tell them one day of what they have manufactured for the destruction of mankind."

And about the Muslims the Qur-án says in chap. xxiv. 55: "Allah promises those who believe and do good among you that He shall make them rulers on earth, as He made rulers those who were before Him, and shall establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them, and that He will certainly, after their fear, give them peace in exchange, so that they shall worship Me, not associating aught with Me; and whoever is ungrateful after this, these it be who are the transgressors."

History bears out the prophecy contained in these words to Muslims. This was the Magna Charta of Islam, granted when Muslims were fighting for their very existence against the odds of heathenism.

In this connection mention may be made of the Petra, or stone, which Daniel saw in his vision as rising and smashing the idol to pieces, and of which the great Psalmist David has said: "The stone which masons discarded became the corner-stone," and of which Jesus in his parable of the vineyard keepers talks to his hearers, when he says that the Kingdom shall be taken away and given to those who will tend the garden honestly. But when the audience of Jesus Christ exclaimed, he silenced them by referring them to the words of David. This corner-stone is even referred to by the Prophet in his sayings recorded by Al-Bukhārī from a report of Abū Huraira, who says the "Prophet of God has said, 'A certain man built a house and people looked at it with admiration, but they found that a corner-stone was missing to complete the edifice, and I and my people are that corner-stone.'"

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ISLAM'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMEN AND ORPHANS

By C. A. SOORMA

(Continued from the February (1929) number, p. 75.)

CHAPTER XIX

DIVORCE IN ISLAM

(continued)

" *Talaq*, or divorce, is strongly condemned by the Muhammadan religion, and it should not be resorted to unless it has become impossible for the parties to live together in peace and harmony, but once it is pronounced it is upheld as valid, although there may be no good cause for it. It is described in a precept of the Prophet as the worst of all the things which the law permits. . . . There are certain limitations imposed by the law upon the right of the husband to dissolve the marriage. The object of these rules is to ensure that the husband was not acting in haste or anger and that separation became inevitable in the interests of the husband and the wife and their children ", (Abdur Rahim, *op. cit.*, pp. 335-6).

I have dealt at some length with *talaq* by the husband against the wife, and *Khula* or divorce by the wife against the husband. There are still left three other kinds of divorce which are recognized by the Islamic law :—

The *third* kind of divorce is called *Mubarat*.

" *Mubarat* (in law) signifies *mutual discharge* from the marriage tie. Under the Sunni law, when both the parties enter into a *Mubarat*, all matrimonial rights which they possess against each other fall to the ground ", (Ameer Ali, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 578).

Thus under *Mubarat* if both the husband and the wife realize that the marriage has been a failure, they may mutually agree to separate, and this without the necessity of an intervention by the *Qazi* or Judge. This, again, is a power which places woman in a position of advantage, since in cases of

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discord she may persuade her husband to agree to a divorce by mutual consent. In a divorce by mutual consent, the husband cannot compel the wife to forgo the whole or any part of her dower.

“A wife who has obtained a release from the marital tie by *Khula* or *Mubarat* is entitled to maintenance during her *iddat*”, (Ameer Ali, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 580).

The *fourth* kind of divorce is a *judicial decree* pronounced by a competent Court. “When the husband is guilty of conduct which makes the matrimonial life intolerable to the wife, when he neglects to perform the duties which the law imposes on him as obligations resulting from marriage, or when he fails to fulfil the engagements voluntarily entered into at the time of the matrimonial contract, she has the right of preferring a complaint before the *Kazi* or Judge and demanding a divorce from the Court. The Judge has the power of granting a divorce not only for habitual ill-treatment, for non-fulfilment of ante-nuptial engagements, for insanity, but also for incurable impotency existing prior to marriage. The power of the *Kazi* or Judge to pronounce a divorce is founded on the express words of Muhammad: ‘*If a woman be prejudiced by a marriage, let it be broken off*’ (Bukhari)”, (Ameer Ali, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 581).

The *fifth* kind of divorce is a divorce pronounced by the wife against the husband in virtue of *delegated authority* to the wife by the husband.

“An agreement made whether before or after marriage by which it is provided that the wife should be at liberty to divorce herself from her husband under certain specified contingencies is valid, if the conditions are of a reasonable nature and are not opposed to the policy of the Mohammedan law. When such an agreement is made, the wife, may, at any time after the happening of the contingency, repudiate herself in the exercise of the power, and a divorce will then take effect to the same extent as if the *talaq* had been pronounced by the husband. *The power so delegated to the wife is not revocable*, and she may exercise the power even after institution of a suit against her for restitution of conjugal rights”, (Mulla,

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op. cit., p. 185 ; Ameer Ali, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. pp. 554-5 ; and Abdur Rahim, *op. cit.*, p. 338).

This power of the wife is technically known as *Tafweed*, and is a very important power indeed.

To sum up, the principles of the law of divorce in Islam are as follows :—

- (a) Islam recognizes the necessity of divorce, as it is indispensable for the maintenance of healthy society and the general happiness of human relations.
- (b) Islam does not give unfettered power to the husband to divorce his wife. Various forms of restraint have been placed on the exercise of such power by him.
- (c) The true spirit of Islam is against the exercise of this power without sufficient cause. The Prophet's condemnation of easy divorce deters to this day those who would like to flout the law.
- (d) For the first time in human history, Islam gave to the wife a corresponding right to divorce herself from her husband in cases where their life is one of continued misery. In this respect, again, Islam treats women far more justly and equitably than other religions.
- (e) Finally, Islam faces the facts of human frailties and intolerance in conjugal relations quite frankly. It does not idealize the marital tie to the extent of condemning the married couple, in cases of disagreement, to eternal bitterness and misery. It regards marriage as a *civil contract* and not a sacrament, with the result that like all other civil contracts it can be terminated under certain circumstances. Compare this with the attitude of Hinduism and the Roman Catholic Church, and one can safely assert that it is Islam, and Islam alone, that offers the ordinary man and woman greater chances of happiness. But in spite of the permission to have recourse to divorce, it is very rarely taken advantage of, and Muslim marriages are, on the whole, quite successful and harmonious.

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CHAPTER XX

REMARRIAGE OF WIDOWS AND DIVORCEES

The following verse enables *divorced women* to remarry :—

- (a) “ And when you have divorced women and they have ended their term (of waiting), then do not prevent them from marrying their (prospective) husbands when they agree among themselves in a lawful manner . . . ” (ii. 232).

The right of maintenance of a divorced woman during her *iddat* has been dealt with in the subsequent chapter on the “ Proprietary and Personal Rights of Women.”

The permission for *Widows to remarry* is contained in the following verses :—

- (a) “ And (as for) those of you who *die* and leave wives behind, they should keep themselves in waiting for four months and ten days, then when they have fully attained their term, there is no blame on you for what they do for themselves in a lawful manner, and Allah is aware of what you do ”, (ii. 234),
- (b) “ And there is no blame on you respecting that which you speak indirectly in the asking of (such) women in marriage or keep (the promise) concealed within your minds . . . ” (ii. 235).

The permission for widows to remarry was denied, as of right in the days of ignorance. As we have seen, the heirs of the deceased man inherited his widows. All this, Islam reforms by giving to the widow the right to choose her own spouse without interference from the heirs. Her rights of inheritance are dealt with in the following chapter.

The reason for the waiting is that the divorced woman or the widow may be pregnant, in which case the period is extended to the time of delivery. There should be no doubt as to who the real father of the child is, which is necessary

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in determining questions of inheritance and other rights of personal succession.

CHAPTER XXI

INHERITANCE

Turning to the laws of *Inheritance*, we get the following verse from the Qur-án :—

- (a) “ Allah enjoins you concerning your children; the male shall have the equal of two females, then if they are more than two females, they shall have *two-thirds* of what the deceased has left, and if there is one, she shall have half; and as for his parents each of them shall have the *sixth* of what he has left if he has a child, but if he has no child and (only) his two parents inherit him, then his mother shall have the *third*; but if he has brothers, then his mother shall have the *sixth*, after (the payment of) a bequest he may have bequeathed or a debt. . . .” (iv. 11).

“ When the *daughters* are the sole heirs they are entitled to a share of two-thirds. The share of two-thirds to which ‘more than two’ daughters are entitled remains the same even when the daughters are two only; and so in practice they have always been judged to be entitled to two-thirds of the property. This is further evident from the analogy of two sisters, who are entitled to two-thirds of the property when they are the sole heirs (iv. 177). As to those different cases in which there are others who inherit along with them, they are also considered in this verse and in that which follows. Where the deceased is survived by parents, the parents first take their respective shares, and the residue goes to the children, if there are any, failing which, the share of the parents is increased. But in case the deceased has brothers, the mother receives the same share as she would have received if the deceased had children. This is the second case. It may be noted that in all cases the payment of bequests and

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debts take precedence of the shares of the heirs", (Muhammad Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 202).

- (b) " And you shall have half of what your wives leave if they have no child, but if they have a child, then you shall have a fourth of what they leave after (payment of) any bequests they may have bequeathed or a debt; and they shall have the fourth of what you leave if you have no child, but if you have a child, then they shall have the eighth of what you leave after (payment of) a bequest you may have bequeathed or a debt; and if a man or a woman leaves property to be inherited by neither parents nor offspring, and he (or she) has a brother or a sister, then each of them shall have the sixth, but if they are more than that, they shall be sharers in the third after (payment of) any bequests that may have been bequeathed or a *debt that does not harm others*. This is an ordinance from Allah: and Allah is Knowing, Forbearing", (iv. 12).

" This is the third case, and it deals with the question when the deceased leaves a husband or a wife with or without children. The husband or the wife takes his or her share first, as in the case of parents, and the residue goes to the children.

" If there are parents as well as husband or wife with children, the first two would take their shares first, and the residue would go to the children, whether males alone or females alone, or males and females mixed. The two-thirds share for two or more daughters can only be given when there are neither parents, nor husband or wife; otherwise they take the residue, as in the case of sons or sons and daughters. . . . By a brother or a sister is meant a brother or a sister on the mother's side. A similar case when the deceased has neither parents nor offspring, and has brothers or sisters or both (where real brothers and sisters, or brothers and sisters on the father's side are meant), is dealt with in the concluding verse of this chapter (iv. 177), which is as follows :—

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- (c) "They ask you for a decision of the law, say: Allah gives you a decision concerning the person who has neither parents nor offspring; if a man dies (and) he has a *sister*, she shall have half of what he leaves, and he shall be her heir if she has no son; but if there be two (sisters), they shall have two-thirds of what he leaves; and if there are brethren, men and women, then the male shall have the like of the portion of two females; Allah makes clear to you lest you err; and Allah knows all things", (iv. 177).

Reverting to verse iv. 12, we notice that the brothers and sisters take the place of children in such a case (i.e. where the deceased leaves neither parents nor offspring), a view which is reinforced by the rule in the above verse (iv. 177). "As in the case of those who have no children, there is much likelihood of their burdening the estate with unnecessary debts, or even admitting debts that have not really been contracted, and of making bequests that would leave nothing for legal heirs, the words *without harming others* are added to make it clear that debts and bequests in such a case shall not prejudice the rights of the legal heirs", (Muhammad Ali, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-4).

To summarize the Islamic law of inheritance where it deals with women, we observe:—

- (a) That Islam does not give unfettered power of testamentary disposition of one's property. The rights of heirs are jealously guarded.
- (b) That before inheritance can be distributed, all valid debts, funeral expenses, widow's dower, bequests, etc., must first be paid.
- (c) That the rights of females generally are recognized, although their shares are less than those of males. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, as men are the chief breadwinners, and as wealth is increased principally by the efforts of men, they are to have more than the women, who although they contribute their share towards the family riches, yet bear a lesser burden in

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the accumulation of wealth. Secondly, women, before marriage are maintained by the father, and after marriage they are maintained and supported by their husbands. Thus their need for wealth generally is less than those of men.

- (d) That on the death of a man, his *mother*, his *widow* and his *daughters all inherit simultaneously*. Their shares vary according as to whether the deceased had parents, wife and children or not. The *widow* and the *mother* are *sharers* in the deceased's property, and they, along with other sharers, are paid first. Then come the *daughters*, who take as *residuaries*. Sons as such have no preference over daughters. In the absence of parents and offspring, the *sisters* of the deceased also inherit. Among the other *female* relatives, *grand-mothers*, *half-sisters*, *son's daughters*, etc., are not overlooked. They too inherit under certain circumstances. Broadly speaking, therefore, the general policy of Islamic law is to recognize the rights of women to inherit as far as possible. That they were far in advance of anything that existed before the Prophet is amply clear from this comparative study. Even to-day, it is superior to Hindu law, as the latter allows the widow either merely a *life-interest* in the property, or she comes in as absolute owner *after the great-grandson*. Again, *under Hindu law, the daughter takes only on the death of the widow*, and even then there is a certain order of precedence, as we have observed, which must be followed. In all these respects, Islam has accorded to women better rights and a higher status.

CHAPTER XXII

PROPRIETARY AND PERSONAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN

- (a) "O you who believe! do not devour your property among yourselves falsely, except that it be by trading by your mutual consent, and do not kill your people; surely Allah is Merciful to you", (iv. 29).

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Though the words are general, yet the verse is especially directed to guard women's rights to property, for usually it was the woman whose property was usurped, and this unjust aggression is forbidden, as is also clear from the following verse:—

- (b) “ And whoever does this aggressively and unjustly, We will soon cast him into fire; and this is easy to Allah ”, (iv. 30).
- (c) “ And do not covet that by which Allah has made some of you excel others. Men shall have the benefit of what they earn *and women shall have the benefit of what they earn*; and ask Allah of His grace, surely Allah knows all things ”, (iv. 32).

This verse clearly entitles women to separate ownership of property, whether married or not, and men are enjoined not to deal unfairly with their property. If unmarried, her relatives or guardians must preserve it for her; and if married, the husband should not regard her property as his own. If by her property the husband or the guardian is enabled to make a profit, such profit should go to her, after deducting a reasonable sum for the management or conduct of such business. Again, should the woman, whether single or married, earn some money either by her skill or by adopting a profession or trade or by other lawful means, then such income is exclusively hers. We have seen that in this respect Islam treats woman as a *feme sole*. Abdur Rahim says:—

“ Under the Muhammadan law the husband does not acquire any right to or control over his wife's property by the fact of marriage. Whatever property she had at the time of marriage remains absolutely her own and at her disposal, and she is under no disability to acquire property by reason of coverture. That is to say, *a woman's legal capacity is no way affected by marriage*, except as regards contracting conjugal relations with others ”, (Abdur Rahim, *op. cit.*, p. 333).

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That the position of the wife and the mother has been greatly raised by Islam is also clear from the following rights which she possesses :—

(a) *Right of Mother to Custody of Infant Children.*

“The mother is entitled to the custody of her *male child* until he has completed the age of seven years, and of *female child* until she has attained puberty, and the right is not lost, though she may have been divorced by her husband”, (Mulla, *Mahomedan Law*, p. 198); and Ameer Ali, *Mahomedan Law*, vol. ii. pp. 293-4).

(b) *Right of Maintenance.*

“The wife has a right corresponding to that of the husband to demand the fulfilment of his marital duties towards her. She is also entitled to be provided with proper accommodation separate from the husband's relations and to be maintained in a way suitable to his own means and the position in life of both. If he refuses or neglects to maintain her, she can pledge his credit. She has also a right if the husband has more than one wife to be treated on terms of strict equality with the others”, (Abdur Rahim, *op. cit.*, p. 334; and Mulla, *op. cit.*, p. 174).

(c) *Dower—a Debt.*

“She is further entitled to the payment of her dower. If such portion of her dower as is payable before dissolution of marriage has not been paid, and she has not yet surrendered her person, she may refuse her conjugal society and, according to Abu Hanifa, she may do this even after surrender. . . . *Mahr* or dower is either a sum of money or other form of property to which the wife becomes entitled by marriage. It is not a consideration proceeding from the husband for the contract of marriage, but it is an obligation imposed by the law on the husband as a mark of respect for the wife, as is evident from the fact that the non-specification of the dower at the time of

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marriage does not affect the validity of the marriage. She or her guardian may stipulate at the time of marriage for any sum however large as dower. If no sum has been specified, she is entitled to her proper dower—that is, the dower which is customarily fixed for the females of her family. . . . The wife's right to dower becomes complete on the consummation of marriage either in fact or what the law regards as such, namely, by valid retirement, or on the death either of the husband or the wife. In case of dissolution of marriage by the husband or of separation for some cause imputable to the husband *before* there has been consummation or valid retirement, the wife becomes entitled to *half* the specified dower, and if no dower has been specified to a present called *mutat* " (this is expressly based on the Qur-án, ch. ii. 236-7) : " In case the separation was due to some cause imputable to the wife herself, she will not be entitled to any dower or present if there has been *no consummation of the marriage*. If a marriage has been annulled on the ground of invalidity, the wife will not be entitled to more than her proper dower", (Abdur Rahim, *op. cit.*, pp. 334-5).

" The *widow's claim for dower* is a debt payable out of the estate of her husband, and it must, like all other debts, be paid before legacies and before distribution of the inheritance," and when " she is in possession of the property of her deceased husband, having obtained such possession lawfully and without force or fraud, and her dower or any part of it is due and unpaid, she is entitled as against the other heirs of her husband *to retain that possession* until her dower is paid. . . . If she is dispossessed of such property, then she may institute a suit for recovery of possession", (Mulla, *op. cit.*, pp. 179, 181-2).

(d) *Maintenance during Iddat.*

(1) " And for the *divorced women* (too) provision must be

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made according to usage; (this is) a duty on those who guard (against evil) ", (ii. 241).

It seems that the Qur-án also allows *maintenance to widows for a year*, besides their right to inherit, as is shown from the following verse:—

- (2) " And those of you who *die* and leave wives behind (making) a bequest in favour of their wives of maintenance *for a year* without turning (them) out, then if they themselves go away, there is no blame on you for what they do of lawful deeds by themselves, and Allah is Mighty, Wise ", (ii. 240).

But in British India this right of the widow to maintenance is not recognized, as the Courts regard it as having been abrogated by subsequent verses. Muhammad Ali, however, is of the opinion that the above verse has not been abrogated by any other verse in the Qur-án. On the contrary, he believes that this verse is in the nature of an *additional* provision for the widows, (Muhammad Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 112; and Mulla, *op. cit.*, p. 174).

CHAPTER XXIII

CONCLUSION

Speaking of the *legal reforms* of Muhammad, Ameer Ali says:—

" The whole history of Mahomedan legislation is a standing rebuke to those who consider that the position of women under the Islamic laws is one of exceptional severity and degradation."

One of the great results of the new legislation, therefore, was to raise women in the scale of civilization, by elevating their moral and social position, and giving the widow, the mother, the daughters and sisters, heritable rights. . . . " The Prophet of Islam enforced as one of the essential teachings of his creed—*Respect for women*; and his followers, in their admiration for the virtues of his celebrated daughter (Fatima), pro-

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claimed her 'the Lady of Paradise' (*Khatoone Jannat*) as the representative of her sex. . . . Mohammed secured to women in his system rights which they had not before possessed; he allowed them privileges the value of which will be more fully appreciated as time advances. *He placed them on a footing of perfect equality with men in the exercise of all legal powers and functions*", (Ameer Ali, *Mahomedan Law*, vol. ii. pp. 24-6).

Among the Arabs women were, and are, still free. It cannot be denied that *the Qur-án gives women the right to appear in public*, as the following verses clearly show:—

- (a) "And say to the believing women that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts and not display their ornaments *except what appears thereof*, and let them wear their head-coverings over their bosoms, and not display their ornaments except to their husbands or their fathers . . . and *let them not strike their feet so that what they hide of their ornaments may be known . . .*" (xxiv. 31).
- (b) "Say to the believing men that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts; that is purer for them; surely Allah is aware of what they do", (xxiv. 30).

Here we get similar injunctions to both men and women. Both are required to cast down their looks and guard their private parts. Had the Qur-án forbidden women to appear in public, there would have been no necessity for it to order *men* "to cast down their looks." It would have been meaningless. Muhammad Ali, commenting on the above verses, remarks:—

"To guard the relations between males and females and to check a too free intermingling of men and women, the Qur-án now lays down another injunction in addition to that which requires both sexes to go abroad with their looks cast down. . . . But women must observe some further directions. The injunction which relates to women in particular is to keep their ornaments concealed. There is a difference of opinion as to

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what *zinat*, or *ornament*, means. According to some it includes the beauty of the body, while according to others it is exclusively applied to external ornaments and adornments. The use of the same word in the concluding portion of the verse (xxiv. 31)—*let them not strike their feet so that what they hide of their ornaments may be known*—supports the latter view, as the only ornaments that can be known by the striking of the feet are external ornaments. But even according to those who include the beauty of the body in the significance of *zinat*, it is permissible for a woman to *have her hands and face uncovered*, as being allowed under the exception *what appears thereof*, as without uncovering these it would be impossible for women to take part in any business; the rest of the body and the ornaments upon it, whether in the form of tight clothes or of gold and silver ornaments, are to be kept concealed by a long head-covering or, say, an overcoat . . .” (Muhammad Ali, *op. cit.*, pp. 701-2).

A reference to Islamic history clearly proves that women often played important rôles in Muslim society. To take but a few of numerous instances, we may note that the Empress Zubaida was a gifted woman and an accomplished poetess, and it is to her generosity that Mecca is provided with that much-needed canal which bears her name. Under the Abbasides, Arab maidens went to fight on horseback, and even commanded troops. The mother of Muqtadir herself presided at the High Court of Appeal, listened to applications, gave audiences to dignitaries and foreign envoys. The Shaikha Shuhda, in the sixth century of the *Hegira*, lectured in Baghdad on history and belles-lettres. One of the most famous lady-jurists was Zainab, daughter of Muwayyid, who was a pupil of some of the greatest jurists of her time, and she was licensed to teach law. Again, under the Ommeyyades women were foremost in culture and refinement. Both Granada and Cordova produced women eminent in the arts and the sciences, such as Nazhun, Zainab, Hamda, Hafsa, Saffiya, and Maria, (Ameer Ali, *A Short History of the Saracens*, pp. 199-201, and 455 *et seq.*).

“The system of seclusion existing generally among Mus-

lims," continues Ameer Ali, "did not come into vogue until the reign of the Ommeyade Walid II. Borrowed originally from the Persians and the Byzantines, its practice became common owing to the character and habits of the sovereign. It is an historical fact that the custom of secluding women prevailed among most nations of antiquity. The Athenians (as we have noticed before) certainly observed it in all its strictness. In later times it found its way among the Byzantines, who claimed to be inheritors of Athenian culture. From them it descended to the Russians, among whom it was maintained with ludicrous rigour until Peter I abolished it by his usual drastic methods. . . . Taken as a whole, woman's condition is not more unfavourable than that of many European women. Her comparative backward condition is the result of want of culture among the community generally rather than of any special feature in the Islamic laws or institutions. *Her legal status is decidedly superior to that of European women.* The social immunities she enjoys allow the fullest exercise on her part of the powers and privileges which the law gives to her. She acts, if *sui juris*, in all matters which relate to herself and to her own property in her own individual right without the intervention of father or husband. She appoints her own attorney, and delegates to him all the powers which she herself possesses. She enters into valid contracts with her husband and her male relations on a footing of perfect equality. If she is ill-treated, she has the right to have the marriage tie dissolved. She is entitled to pledge the credit of her husband for the maintenance of herself and her children. She is able, even if holding a different creed from that of her husband, to claim the free and unfettered exercise of her own religious observances. If the husband is possessed of means, he is bound to place at his non-Muslim wife's disposal some conveyance to take her to her usual place of worship. He is debarred from molesting her in the smallest degree on the exercise of her faith, or depriving her of the custody of her children without valid reason, such as misconduct or tampering with their religion. Her ante-nuptial settlement is her own by absolute right, and she can deal with it according to her own free-will and pleasure. To

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become entitled to its enjoyment, she requires no intermediate trustees or next friends. When she is aggrieved by her husband she has a right to sue him in her own individual capacity. Her claim for her ante-nuptial settlement on the estate of her husband has priority over all unsecured debts and she ranks in *pari passu* with secured creditors . . . " (Ameer Ali, *Mahomedan Law*, vol. ii. pp. 25-27).

Where, then, is the degradation of woman in Islam! Rather, the Qur-án emphasizes:—

- (a) " And whoever does good deeds, *whether male or female*, and he (or she) is a believer—these shall enter the garden, and they shall not be dealt with a jot unjustly ", (iv. 124).
- (b) " Allah has promised to the believing men *and the believing women* gardens, beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them, and goodly dwellings in gardens of perpetual abode . . . " (ix. 72).

For the first time spiritual, legal, and social equality is conceded to woman, and thus in its treatment of the relationship of man and woman, Islam has given to mankind a code of laws which for their practicality, equity, far-sightedness, and universality remains to this day unparalleled. Its service alone in this respect should earn for it the undying gratitude of humanity. From the very status of a slave, from the very dust beneath man's feet, Islam has raised woman to be man's companion and partner in life. It is a glorious chapter in the history of human progress and civilization!

Blessed is the name of Muhammad, who said: " Paradise lies at the feet of thy Mother." Thus on Woman he bestowed the signal honour of being the true Mother of Humanity and the twin child of Nature!

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